

Inge Adriansen: *Erindringssteder i Danmark. Monumenter, mindesmærker og mødesteder*. København: Museum Tusculanums Forlag 2010, 515 S.

Ever since the French historian Pierre Nora introduced his famous concept of *lieu-de-mémoire*, it has influenced many researchers. Although originally very much restricted to French tradition, it has made its way into the histories of other nation states, and in some countries, compilations of *lieux-de-mémoire* have been edited after the French model. So far, this has not been the case in Denmark, and even if Inge Adriansen's *Erindringssteder i Danmark* takes its title from the concept of Nora, it follows a different approach.

Inge Adriansen has chosen a clear, but also restricted definition of a *lieu-de-mémoire*, reducing it exclusively to the monuments, memorials and places where public assemblies come together in a context of a memorial culture. Even if some might find that the immaterial dimension constitutes one of the most fascinating aspects of Pierre Nora's original concept, it can be an advantage to focus on the monumental dimension. Furthermore, Inge Adriansen can profit from the findings of a recent national survey where monuments and national symbols were identified and located. Making use of data

from this database, the book is, therefore, solidly rooted in a tradition of inventories and empirical data that is associated with the world of museums, in which the author has her background, but *Erindringssteder i Danmark* is much more than just a list of *lieux-de-mémoire*.

The book categorises individual monuments into relevant groups, such as war monuments, monuments to the history and the nation, single individuals, places of assembly, and an interesting category of destroyed or ruined monuments. Additionally, a number of monuments are described and placed in a historical setting that clearly shows the dynamic and changing aspect of their role and importance. The text itself becomes a vivid and exciting presentation of some aspects of Danish history from an unusual, but very refreshing angle. Inge Adriansen has an impressive record in this field and the book brilliantly displays her ability to place the monuments in their different settings and discuss the meaning and symbolism behind them.

Inge Adriansen is well aware of the use of history and the role of a culture of memory in society, and the changing role of

individual monuments demonstrates the processual aspect of history. A good example is found in the four appearances of the famous Danish social democratic Prime Minister Stauning in Dybbøl, the most important Danish national memorial and the site of Denmark's decisive defeat in the Danish-German War of 1864. Within an interval of just 15 years, from 1921 to 1936, he gave four very different speeches at this symbolic place. Step by step, Stauning moved away from a traditional social democratic anti-militarist and internationalist rejection of the national memorial tradition to a much more consensual and even national interpretation. This reflected the Social Democrats' growing importance and support, but also the increasing uncertainty about German intentions in the border region.

It is of course impossible to go into detail about every single monument, but the selection is broad and well chosen. The most famous and influential monuments in Danish history are presented in the book, but the author also picks out several lesser-known locations of a particular interest as *lieu-de-mémoire* or simply because they contain an interesting, often half-forgotten story. There is no doubt that this book will remain an indispensable source for everyone who wants to study monuments and the culture of memory in Danish history.

This impressive survey is in itself quite monumental, as theme, text, photos and layout come together in a perfect and inspiring unity. Undoubtedly, the photographer Per Bak Jensen deserves his share of the praise, because his magnificent photos are congenial to the theme of the book. Fortunately, he has chosen a very purist approach and there is nothing disturbing and irrelevant in the illustrations, giving the monuments an impressive character.

The book contains monuments related to the absolutist monarchy in the era before the nation state, but unsurprisingly, a national dimension is also strongly present in this work, reflecting the fact that national ideology and the wars it provoked produced more monuments than any other ideology. Even though Denmark is justly reckoned to be a homogenous state, some of the maps that show the location of the different monuments based on category and theme reveal an interesting regional dimension. Of course the monuments celebrating the results of the post-1864 "war" against the Moors are mainly located in Western Jutland, or the monuments for First World War in Northern Schleswig, where soldiers were fighting in the German army. However, monuments for the so-called "reunification" in 1920 for the first constitutional king, Frederik VII, and especially for democracy and constitution, do show clear regional strongholds. In the last case, the

island of Funen and Eastern Seeland are over-represented. Also, the connection between places for assembly and monuments is much stronger in Northern Schleswig. Some parts of the country, especially the peripheries like Northern Jutland, leap to the eye as places with very few important monuments.

Closely connected to the national survey, Inge Adriansen's book is concerned with *lieux-de-mémoire* in Denmark, and in the maps we recognize the well-known contours of modern-day Denmark. Here, the book follows in the footsteps of a nation-state historiography that has tended to forget about Danish history and tradition outside of the borders of the modern state. This is, however, not quite so. Inge Adriansen does mention monuments outside of the border, and when they turn up – like the monument to the battle of 1814 at Sehested in Holstein or the monumental cemetery in Flensburg – we get a glimpse of the difficult balance between an approach that, for good reasons, is restricted to the area of the modern nation state and a history where the monuments are spread over a larger area. On the other hand, this leaves the reader reassured that even such a comprehensive study is still open to further questions and research.

*Steen Bo Frandsen (Sønderborg)*